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Cathedral of the Sacred Heart: “Friday Mass”

by Marianna Booth

On November 13 me and my friend Laith went to the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart. They follow traditional Catholic denomination. We went on Friday the 13th around 12:30 pm. The presiding official was Father Patrick.

The entrance was guarded by romanesque pillars with supported a large dome ceiling. There are many stained glass art pieces depicting different and important events in the life of Jesus Christ. I walked through two large sets of glass doors into a large stone floored hall filled with rows of pews. Between the pews was a large basin filled with Holy Water to anoint yourself with before entering the cathedral. Down the center of the church, there were many arch ways leading to pulpit. There were big lights hanging from the ceiling on either side of the arch ways. There were four statues Jesus and his disciples. Each effigy was decorated with prayer candles and a place to kneel and pray to God. The pulpit had marble stairs leading up to the podium and there were candles on each side. Behind that, there was a place for the choir to sit and stand. There were other places throughout the cathedral that showed the beautiful structure of stained glass. We were greeted by two women at the front and it was very quiet. There was a small group of older women and one was black. It was mostly women who were older with the exception of a college girl lighting a candle across the cathedral. There were roughly 15 people present. I didn't feel comfortable talking to the other people in the

service because it was a very quiet and somber place. No one really sat with us. Laith's mom is of Catholic origin so he knew a lot and was able to explain things that I had questions about. As we were leaving, the same two women who had greeted us when we entered asked if we had any questions. Then we left.

As we walked in, I was talking to Laith asking him questions. I didn't realize you are suppose to be very quiet. We got there early and people were praying and kneeling. I was also wearing heels that made loud noises on the hard floor. I immediately felt out of place. I was talking loudly and making noises with my feet. But thankfully, the other people who were praying didn't seem to mind. The emotional aspect of this service was largely hopeful and redeeming and focused on understanding. It started with an opening prayer from the book and everyone kneeled in the pews. There were little knees rests for praying. Then there was the sermon as previously mentioned. It ended off with everyone singing and standing from the hymn book. We then turned to the people around us in the service and said “May peace be with you.” The congregation remains largely quiet other than the occasional song or “Amen”. The service was extremely ritualistic because we all spoke the same memorized prayer and we all knelt. The rituals performed in each service seemed to be a feeling of obedience and responsibility. As previously described, the stained glass down the sides of the building were representative for

important parts of Jesus' life. I had never been to a Catholic service before and I was very surprised at all the rituals that were done. Up down up down. When I left, I was still in awe of everything I had just experienced. Laith and I discussed the effects that a cathedral has on a person who is entering for the first time. It is so overwhelmingly beautiful, it made me feel inferior. That was probably the goal, for us to completely surrender ourselves to God. •

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